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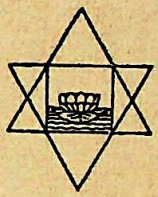
BANKIM-
TILAK-
DAYANANDA



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BANKIM-TILAK-DAYANANDA

Sri Aurobindo

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CONTENTS

		Page
I.	BANDE MATARAM	1
II.	RISHI BANKIM CHANDRA . . .	7
III.	BAL GANGADHAR TILAK . . .	15
IV.	DAYANANDA	
	(i) The Man and His Work .	39
	(ii) Dayananda and the Veda .	48
V.	THE MEN THAT PASS . . .	63

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BANDE MATARAM

(Original Bengali in Devanagri Character)

वन्दे मातरम् ।

सुजलां सुफलां मलयज-शीतलां
शस्य-श्यामलां मातरम् ।
शुभ्र-ज्योत्स्ना-पुलकित-यामिनीम्
फुल्ल-कुसुमित-द्रुमदल-शोभिनीम्
सुहासिनीं सुमधुर-भाषिणीम्
सुखदां वरदां मातरम् ॥

राप्तकोटी-कण्ठ-कलकल-निनाद कराले
द्विसप्तकोटी-भुजै धृत-खरकरवाले
के बले मा तुमि अबले !
बहुबल-धारिणीं नमामि तारिणीं
रिपुदल-वारिणीं मातरम् ॥

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तुमि विद्या तुमि धर्म्म
तुमि हृदि तुमि मर्म्म
त्वं हि प्राणाः शरीरे ।
बाहुते तुमि मा शक्ति
हृदये तुमि मा भक्ति
तोमारइ प्रतिमा गड़ि
मन्दिरे मन्दिरे ।
त्वं हि दुर्गा दशप्रहरण-धारिणी
कमला कमल-दल-विहारिणी
वाणी विद्यादायिनी
नमामि त्वां
नमामि कमलां अमलां अतुलां
सुजलां सुफलां मातरम्,
वन्दे मातरम् ।
श्यामलां सरलां सुस्मितां भूषितां
धरणीं भरणीं मातरम् ॥

—बङ्किमचन्द्र

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BANDE MATARAM

(Translation)

Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free.
Glory of moonlight dreams,
Over thy branches and lordly streams,
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet,
Speaker sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
When the swords flash out in twice seventy
million hands
And seventy million voices roar
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
With many strengths who art mighty and stored,

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To thee I call, Mother and Lord!
Thou who savest, arise and save!
To her I cry who ever her foemen drave
Back from plain and sea
And shook herself free.
Thou art wisdom, thou art law,
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,
Thou the love divine, the awe
In our hearts that conquers death.
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,
Thine the beauty, thine the charm.
Every image made divine
In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,
With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,
Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,
And the Muse a hundred-toned.
Pure and perfect without peer,
Mother, lend thine ear.
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Dark of hue, O candid-fair
In thy soul, with jewelled hair
And thy glorious smile divine,
Loveliest of all earthly lands,
Showering wealth from well-stored hands!
Mother, mother mine!
Mother sweet, I bow to thee,
Mother great and free!

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BANDE MATARAM

(Translation in prose)*

I bow to thee, Mother,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
cool with the winds of the south,
dark with the crops of the harvests,
the Mother!
Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss!

Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,
and the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,

---

* TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

It is difficult to translate the National Anthem of Bengal into verse in another language owing to its unique union of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force. All attempts in this direction have been failures. In order, therefore, to bring the reader unacquainted with Bengali nearer to the exact force of the original, I give the translation in prose line by line.

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Who sayeth to thee, Mother, that thou art
weak?
Holder of multitudinous strength,
I bow to her who saves,
to her who drives from her the armies of her
foemen,
the Mother!

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
thou our heart, thou our soul,
for thou art the life in our body.
In the arm thou art might, O Mother,
in the heart, O Mother, thou art love and
faith,
it is thy image we raise in every temple.

For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons
of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses
and Speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,
to thee I bow!
I bow to thee, goddess of wealth,
pure and peerless,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
the Mother!
I bow to thee, Mother,
dark-hued, candid,
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,
the Mother!

Karmayogin—20th November, 1909

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RISHI BANKIM CHANDRA

THERE are many who, lamenting the by-gone glories of this great and ancient nation, speak as if the Rishis of old, the inspired creators of thought and civilisation, were a miracle of our heroic age, not to be repeated among degenerate men and in our distressful present. This is an error and thrice an error. Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness, holiness may be overclouded but never, even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil; and there has been no age in which they have not been born. Among the Rishis of the later age we have at last realised that we must include the name of the man who gave us the reviving mantra which is creating a new India, the mantra *Bande Mataram*.

The Rishi is different from the saint. His life may not have been distinguished by superior holiness nor his character by an ideal beauty. He is not great by what he was himself but by what he has expressed.

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A great and vivifying message had to be given to a nation or to humanity, and God has chosen this mouth on which to shape the words of the message. A momentous vision had to be revealed; and it is his eyes which the Almighty first unseals. The message which he has received, the vision which has been vouchsafed to him, he declares to the world with all the strength that is in him, and in one supreme moment of inspiration expresses it in words which have merely to be uttered to stir men's inmost natures, clarify their minds, seize their hearts and impel them to things which would have been impossible to them in their ordinary moments. Those words are the mantra which he was born to reveal and of that mantra he is the seer.

What is it for which we worship the name of Bankim today? what was his message to us or what the vision which he saw and has helped us to see? He was a great poet, a master of beautiful language and a creator of fair and gracious dream-figures in the world of imagination; but it is not as a poet, stylist or novelist that Bengal does honour to him today. It is probable that the literary critic of the future will reckon *Kapalkundala*, *Bishabriksha* and *Krishnakanter Will* as his artistic masterpieces, and speak with qualified praise of *Devi Chaudhurani*, *Ananda Math*, *Krishnacharit* or *Dharmatattwa*. Yet it is the Bankim of these latter works and not the

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Bankim of the great creative masterpieces who will rank among the Makers of Modern India. The earlier Bankim was only a poet and stylist—the later Bankim was a seer and nation-builder.

But even as a poet and stylist Bankim did a work of supreme national importance, not for the whole of India, or only indirectly for the whole of India, but for Bengal which was destined to lead India and be in the vanguard of national development. No nation can grow without finding a fit and satisfying medium of expression for the new self into which it is developing—without a language which shall give permanent shape to its thoughts and feelings and carry every new impulse swiftly and triumphantly into the consciousness of all. It was Bankim's first great service to India that he gave the race which stood in its vanguard such a perfect and satisfying medium. He was blamed for corrupting the purity of the Bengali tongue; but the pure Bengali of the old poets could have expressed nothing but a conservative and unprogressing Bengal. The race was expanding and changing, and it needed a means of expression capable of change and expansion. He was blamed also for replacing the high literary Bengali of the Pundits by a mixed popular tongue which was neither the learned language nor good vernacular. But the Bengali of the Pundits would have crushed the growing richness, variety and versatility of the

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Bengali genius under its stiff inflexible ponderousness. We needed a tongue for other purposes than dignified treatises and erudite lucubrations. We needed a language which should combine the strength, dignity or soft beauty of Sanskrit with the nerve and vigour of the vernacular, capable at one end of the utmost vernacular raciness and at the other of the most sonorous gravity. Bankim divined our need and was inspired to meet it,—he gave us a means by which the soul of Bengal could express itself to itself.

As he had divined the linguistic need of his country's future, so he divined also its political need. He, first of our great publicists, understood the hollowness and inutility of the method of political agitation which prevailed in his time and exposed it with merciless satire in his *Lokarahasya* and *Kamalakanter Daptar*. But he was not satisfied merely with destructive criticism,—he had a positive vision of what was needed for the salvation of the country. He saw that the force from above must be met by a mightier reacting force from below,—the strength of repression by an insurgent national strength. He bade us leave the canine method of agitation for the leonine. The Mother of his vision held trenchant steel in her twice seventy million hands and not the bowl of the mendicant. It was the gospel of fearless strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in *Ananda Math* and *Devi Chaudhurani*.

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And he had an inspired unerring vision of the moral strength which must be at the back of the outer force. He perceived that the first element of the moral strength must be *tyaga*, complete self-sacrifice for the country and complete self-devotion to the work of liberation. His workers and fighters for the motherland are political *byragees* who have no other thought than their duty to her and have put all else behind them as less dear and less precious and only to be resumed when their work for her is done. Whoever loves self or wife or child or goods more than his country is a poor and imperfect patriot; not by him shall the great work be accomplished. Again, he perceived that the second element of the moral strength needed must be self-discipline and organization. This truth he expressed in the elaborate training of Devi Chaudhurani for her work, in the strict rules of the Association of the "Ananda Math" and in the pictures of perfect organization which those books contain. Lastly, he perceived that the third element of moral strength must be the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. The religion of patriotism,—this is the master idea of Bankim's writings. It is already foreshadowed in *Devi Chaudhurani*. In *Dharmatattwa* the idea and in *Krishnacharit* the picture of a perfect and many-sided Karmayoga is sketched, the crown of which shall be work for one's country and one's kind. In *Ananda Math*

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this idea is the keynote of the whole book and received its perfect lyrical expression in the great song which has become the national anthem of United India. This is the second great service of Bankim to this country that he pointed out to it the way of salvation and gave it the religion of patriotism. Of the new spirit which is leading the nation to resurgence and independence, he is the inspirer and political guru.

The third and supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother. The bare intellectual idea of the motherland is not in itself a great driving force; the mere recognition of the desirability of freedom is not an inspiring motive. There are few Indians at present, whether loyalist, moderate or nationalist in their political views, who do not recognise that the country has claims on them or that freedom in the abstract is a desirable thing. But most of us, when it is a question between the claims of the country and other claims, do not in practice prefer the service of the country; and while many may have the wish to see freedom accomplished, few have the will to accomplish it. There are other things which we hold dearer and which we fear to see imperilled either in the struggle for freedom or by its accomplishment. It is not till the Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till

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she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves a doomed nation is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others. It was thirty-two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song and few listened; but in a sudden moment of awakening from long delusions the people of Bengal looked round for the truth and in a fated moment somebody sang *Bande Mataram*. The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself. Once that vision has come to a people, there can be no rest, no peace, no further slumber till the temple has been made ready, the image installed and the sacrifice offered. A great nation which has had that vision can never again bend its neck in subjection to the yoke of a conqueror.

Bandemataram—16th April, 1907

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BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

NEITHER Mr. Tilak nor his speeches really require any presentation or foreword. His speeches are, like the featureless Brahman, self-luminous. Straightforward, lucid, never turning aside from the point which they mean to hammer in or wrapping it up in ornamental verbiage, they read like a series of self-evident propositions. And Mr. Tilak himself, his career, his place in Indian politics are also a self-evident proposition, a hard fact baffling and dismaying in the last degree to those to whom his name has been anathema and his increasing pre-eminence figured as a portent of evil. The condition of things in India being given, the one possible aim for political effort resulting and the sole means and spirit by which it could be brought about, this man had to come and, once in the field, had to come to the front. He could not but stand in the end where he stands today, as one of the two or three leaders of the Indian people who are in their eyes the incarnations of the national endeavour and the God-given captains of the national aspiration. His life, his

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character, his work and endurance, his acceptance by the heart and the mind of the people are a stronger argument than all the reasonings in his speeches, powerful as these are, for Swaraj, Self-government, Home Rule, by whatever name we may call the sole possible present aim of our effort, the freedom of the life of India, its self-determination by the people of India. Arguments and speeches do not win liberty for a nation; but where there is a will in the nation to be free and a man to embody that will in every action of his life and to devote his days to its realisation in the face of every difficulty and every suffering, and where the will of the nation has once said, "This man and his life mean what I have in my heart and in my purpose," that is a sure signpost of the future which no one has any excuse for mistaking.

That indomitable will and that unwavering devotion have been the whole meaning of Mr. Tilak's life; they are the reason of his immense hold on the people. For he does not owe his pre-eminent position to any of the causes which have usually made for political leading in India, wealth and great social position, professional success, recognition by Government, a power of fervid oratory or of fluent and taking speech; for he had none of these things to help him. He owes it to himself alone and to the thing his life has meant and because he has meant it with his whole mind and his whole soul. He has kept back nothing for himself or

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for other aims, but has given all himself to his country.

Yet is Mr. Tilak a man of various and no ordinary gifts, and in several lines of life he might have achieved present distinction or a pre-eminent and enduring fame. Though he has never practised, he has a close knowledge of law and an acute legal mind which, had he cared in the least degree for wealth and worldly position, would have brought him to the front at the bar. He is a great Sanskrit scholar, a powerful writer and a strong, subtle and lucid thinker. He might have filled a large place in the field of contemporary Asiatic scholarship. Even as it is, his *Orion* and his *Arctic Home* have acquired at once a worldwide recognition and left as strong a mark as can at all be imprinted on the ever-shifting sands of oriental research. His work on the Gita, no mere commentary but an original criticism and presentation of ethical truth, is a monumental work, the first prose writing of the front rank in weight and importance in the Marathi language, and likely to become a classic. This one book sufficiently proves that had he devoted his energies in this direction, he might easily have filled a large place in the history of Marathi literature and in the history of ethical thought, so subtle and comprehensive is its thinking, so great the perfection and satisfying force of its style. But it was psychologically impossible for Mr. Tilak to devote his energies in any great degree to another action than

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the one life-mission for which the Master of his works had chosen him. His powerful literary gift has been given up to a journalistic work, ephemeral as even the best journalistic work must be, but consistently brilliant, vigorous, politically educative through decades, to an extent seldom matched and certainly never surpassed. His scholastic labour has been done almost by way of recreation. Nor can anything be more significant than the fact that the works which have brought him a fame other than that of the politician and patriot, were done in periods of compulsory cessation from his life-work,—planned and partly, if not wholly, executed during the imprisonments which could alone enforce leisure upon this unresting worker for his country. Even these by-products of his genius have some reference to the one passion of his life, the renewal, if not the surpassing of the past greatness of the nation by the greatness of its future. His Vedic researches seek to fix its pre-historic point of departure; the *Gita-rahasya* takes the scripture which is perhaps the strongest and most comprehensive production of Indian spirituality and justifies to that spirituality, by its own authoritative ancient message, the sense of the importance of life, of action, of human existence, of man's labour for mankind which is indispensable to the idealism of the modern spirit.

The landmarks of Mr. Tilak's life are landmarks

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also in the history of his province and his country. His first great step associated him in a pioneer work whose motive was to educate the people for a new life under the new conditions,—on the one side a purely educational movement of which the fruit was the Ferguson College, fitly founding the reawakening of the country by an effort of which co-operation in self-sacrifice was the moving spirit, on the other the initiation of the *Kesari* newspaper, which since then has figured increasingly as the characteristic and powerful expression of the political mind of Maharashtra. Mr. Tilak's career has counted three periods each of which had an imprisonment for its culminating point. His first imprisonment in the Kolhapur case belongs to this first stage of self-development and development of the Mahratta country for new ideas and activities and for the national future.

The second period brought in a wider conception and a profounder effort. For now it was to reawaken not only the political mind, but the soul of the people by linking its future to its past; it worked by a more strenuous and popular propaganda which reached its height in the organization of the Shivaji and the Ganapati festivals. His separation from the social reform leader, Agarkar, had opened the way for the peculiar role which he has played as a trusted and accredited leader of conservative and religious India in the paths of democratic politics. It was this position

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which enabled him to effect the union of the new political spirit with the tradition and sentiment of the historic past and of both with the ineradicable religious temperament of the people of which these festivals were the symbol. The Congress movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character and methods, confined to the English-educated few, founded on the political rights and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals, but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past and to restore continuity to the political life of the nation. He developed a language and a spirit and he used methods which indianised the movement and brought into it the masses. To his work of this period we owe that really living, strong and spontaneously organized movement in Maharashtra which has shown its energy and sincerity in more than one crisis and struggle. This divination of the mind and spirit of his people and its needs and this power to seize on the right way to call it forth prove strikingly the political genius of Mr. Tilak; they made him the one man predestined to lead them in this trying and difficult period when all has to be discovered and all has to be reconstructed. What was

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done then by Mr. Tilak in Maharashtra has been initiated for all India by the Swadeshi movement. To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour and spirituality are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful political awakening in India. Others, writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth. Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics. This second period of his labour for his country culminated in a longer and harsher imprisonment which was, as it were, the second seal of the divine hand upon his work; for there can be no diviner seal than suffering for a cause.

A third period, that of the Swadeshi movement, brought Mr. Tilak forward prominently as an All-India leader; it gave him at last the wider field, the greater driving power, the larger leverage he needed to bring his life-work rapidly to a head, and not only in Maharashtra but throughout the country. The incidents of that period are too fresh in memory to need recalling. From the inception of the Boycott to the Surat catastrophe and his last and longest imprisonment, which was its sequel, the name and work of Mr. Tilak are a part of Indian history. These three imprisonments, each showing more clearly the moral stuff and quality of the man under the test

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and the revealing glare of suffering, have been the three seals of his career. The first found him one of a small knot of pioneer workers; it marked him out to be the strong and inflexible leader of a strong and sturdy people. The second found him already the inspiring power of a great reawakening of the Maratha spirit; it left him an uncrowned king in the Deccan and gave him that high reputation throughout India which was the foundation-stone of his present commanding influence. The last found him the leader of an All-India party, the foremost exponent and head of a thorough-going Naionalism: it sent him back to be one of the two or three foremost men of India adored and followed by the whole nation. He now stands in the last period of his life-long toil for his country. It is one in which for the first time some ray of immediate hope, some prospect of near success shines upon a cause which at one time seemed destined to a long frustration and fulfilment only perhaps after a century of labour, struggle and suffering.

The qualities which have supported him and given him his hard-earned success, have been comparatively rare in Indian politics. The first is his entirely representative character as a born leader for the sub-nation to which he belongs. India is a unity full of diversities and its strength as well as its weakness is rooted in those diversities: the vigour of its national life can exist only by the vigour of its regional life. Therefore

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in politics as in everything else a leader, to have a firm basis for his life-work, must build it upon a living work and influence in his own sub-race or province. No man was more fitted to do this than Mr. Tilak. He is the very type and incarnation of the Maratha character, the Maratha qualities, the Maratha spirit, but with the unified solidity in the character, the touch of genius in the qualities, the vital force in the spirit which make a great personality readily the representative man of his people. The Maratha race, as their soil and their history have made them, are a rugged, strong and sturdy people, democratic in their every fibre, keenly intelligent and practical to the very marrow, following in ideas, even in poetry, philosophy and religion the drive towards life and action, capable of great fervour, feeling and enthusiasm, like all Indian peoples, but not emotional idealists, having in their thought and speech always a turn for strength, sense, accuracy, lucidity and vigour, in learning and scholarship patient, industrious, careful, thorough and penetrating, in life simple, hardy and frugal, in their temperament courageous, pugnacious, full of spirit, yet with a tact in dealing with hard facts and circumventing obstacles, shrewd yet aggressive diplomatists, born politicians, born fighters. All this Mr. Tilak is with a singular and eminent completeness, and all on a large scale, adding to it all a lucid simplicity of genius, a secret intensity,

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an inner strength of will, a single-mindedness in aim of quite extraordinary force, which remind one of the brightness, sharpness and perfect temper of a fine sword hidden in a sober scabbard. As he emerged on the political field, his people saw more and more clearly in him their representative man, themselves in large, the genius of their type. They felt him to be of one spirit and make with the great men who had made their past history, almost believed him to be a reincarnation of one of them returned to carry out his old work in a new form and under new conditions. They beheld in him the spirit of Maharashtra once again embodied in a great individual. He occupies a position in his province which has no parallel in the rest of India.

On the wider national field also Mr. Tilak has rare qualities which fit him for the hour and the work. He is in no sense what his enemies have called him, a demagogue: he has not the loose suppleness, the oratorical fervour, the facile appeal to the passions which demagogy requires; his speeches are too much made up of hard and straight thinking, he is too much a man of serious and practical action. None more careless of mere effervescence, emotional applause, popular gush, public ovations. He tolerates them since popular enthusiasm will express itself in that way; but he has always been a little impatient of them as dissipative of serious strength and will and a waste

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of time and energy which might better have been solidified and devoted to effective work. But he is entirely a democratic politician, of a type not very common among our leaders, one who can both awaken the spirit of the mass and respond to their spirit, able to lead them, but also able to see where he must follow the lead of their predominant sense and will and feelings. He moves among his followers as one of them in a perfect equality, simple and familiar in his dealings with them by the very force of his temperament and character, open, plain and direct and, though capable of great reserve in his speech, yet, wherever necessary, admitting them into his plans and ideas as one taking counsel of them, taking their sense even while enforcing as much as possible his own view of policy and action with all the great strength of quiet will at his command. He has that closeness of spirit to the mass of men, that unpretentious openness of intercourse with them, that faculty of plain and direct speech which interprets their feelings and shows them how to think out what they feel, which are pre-eminently the democratic qualities. For this reason he has always been able to unite all classes of men behind him, to be the leader not only of the educated, but of the people, the merchant, the trader, the villager, the peasant. All Maharashtra understands him when he speaks or writes; all Maharashtra is ready to follow

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him when he acts. Into his wider field in the troubled Swadeshi times he carried the same qualities and the same power of democratic leadership.

It is equally a mistake to think of Mr. Tilak as by nature a revolutionary leader; that is not his character or his political temperament. The Indian people generally, with the possible exception of emotional and idealistic Bengal, have nothing or very little of the revolutionary temper; they can be goaded to revolution, like any and every people on the face of the earth, but they have no natural disposition towards it. They are capable of large ideals and fervent enthusiasms, sensitive in feeling and liable to gusts of passionate revolt which are easily appeased by even an appearance of concession; but naturally they are conservative in temperament and deliberate in action. Mr. Tilak, though a strong-willed man and a fighter by nature, has this much of the ordinary Indian temperament, that with a large mind open to progressive ideas he unites a conservative temperament strongly in touch with the sense of his people. In a free India he would probably have figured as an advanced Liberal statesman eager for national progress and greatness, but as careful of every step as firm and decided in it and always seeking to carry the conservative instinct of the nation with him in every change. He is besides a born Parliamentarian, a leader for the assembly, though always in touch

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with the people outside as the constant source of the mandate and the final referee in differences. He loves a clear and fixed procedure which he can abide by and use, even while making the most of its details, —of which the theory and practice would be always at his finger-ends,—to secure a practical advantage in the struggle of parties. He always set a high value on the Congress for this reason; he saw in it a centralising body, an instrument and a first, though yet shapeless, essay at a popular assembly. Many after Surat spoke of him as the deliberate breaker of the Congress, but to no one was the catastrophe so great a blow as to Mr. Tilak. He did not love the do-nothingness of that assembly, but he valued it both as a great national fact and for its unrealised possibilities and hoped to make of it a central organization for practical work. To destroy an existing and useful institution was alien to his way of seeing and would not have entered into his ideas or his wishes.

Moreover, though he has ideals, he is not an idealist by character. Once the ideal fixed, all the rest is for him practical work, the facing of hard facts, though also the overcoming of them when they stand in the way of the goal, the use of strong and effective means with the utmost care and prudence consistent with the primary need of as rapid an effectivity as will and earnest action can bring about. Though he can be obstinate and iron-willed when his mind is made

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up as to the necessity of a course of action or the indispensable recognition of a principle, he is always ready for a compromise which will allow of getting real work done, and will take willingly half a loaf rather than no bread, though always with a full intention of getting the whole loaf in good time. But he will not accept chaff or plaster in place of good bread. Nor does he like to go too far ahead of possibilities, and indeed has often shown in this respect a caution highly disconcerting to the more impatient of his followers. But neither would he mistake, like the born Moderate, the minimum effort and the minimum immediate aim for the utmost possibility of the moment. Such a man is no natural revolutionist, but a constitutionalist by temper, though always in such times necessarily the leader of an advanced party or section. A clear constitution he could use, amend and enlarge would have suited him much better than to break existing institutions and get a clear field for innovations which is the natural delight of the revolutionary temperament.

This character of Mr. Tilak's mind explains his attitude in social reform. He is no dogmatic reactionary. The Maratha people are incapable of either the unreasoning or too reasoning rigid conservatism or of the fiery iconoclasm which can exist side by side,—they are often only two sides of the same temper of mind,—in other parts of India. It is attached to its

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social institutions like all peoples who live close to the soil, but it has always shown a readiness to adapt, loosen and accommodate them in practice to the pressure of actual needs. Mr. Tilak shares this general temperament and attitude of his people. But there have also been other reasons which a strong political sense has dictated; and first, the clear perception that the political movement could not afford to cut itself off from the great mass of the nation or split itself up into warring factions by a premature association of the social reform question with politics. The proper time for that, a politician would naturally feel, is when the country has a free assembly of its own which can consult the needs or carry out the mandates of the people. Moreover, he has felt strongly that political emancipation was the one pressing need for the people of India and that all else not directly connected with it must take a second place; that has been the principle of his own life and he has held that it should be the principle of the national life at the present hour. Let us have first liberty and the organised control of the life of the nation, afterwards we can see how we should use it in social matters; meanwhile let us move on without noise and strife, only so far as actual need and advisability demand and the sense of the people is ready to advance. This attitude may be right or wrong; but, Mr. Tilak being what he is and the nation being what it is, he could take no other.

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If, then, Mr. Tilak has throughout his life been an exponent of the idea of radical change in politics and during the Swadeshi agitation the head of a party which could be called extremist, it is due to that clear practical sense, essential in a leader of political action, which seizes at once on the main necessity and goes straight without hesitation or deviation to the indispensable means. There are always two classes of political mind: one is preoccupied with details for their own sake, revels in the petty points of the moment and puts away into the background the great principles and the great necessities, the other sees rather these first and always and details only in relation to them. The one type moves in a routine circle which may or may not have an issue; it cannot see the forest for the trees and it is only by an accident that it stumbles, if at all, on the way out. The other type takes a mountain-top view of the goal and all the directions and keeps that in its mental compass through all the deflections, retardations and tortuosities which the character of the intervening country may compel it to accept; but these it abridges as much as possible. The former class arrogate the name of statesman in their own day; it is to the latter that posterity concedes it and sees in them the true leaders of great movements. Mr. Tilak, like all men of pre-eminent political genius, belongs to this second and greater order of mind.

Moreover in India, owing to the divorce of political

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activity from the actual government and administration of the affairs of the country, an academical turn of thought is too common in our dealings with politics. But Mr. Tilak has never been an academical politician, a "student of politics" meddling with action; his turn has always been to see actualities and move forward in their light. It was impossible for him to view the facts and needs of current Indian politics of the nineteenth century in the pure serene or the dim religious light of the Witenagemot and the Magna Charta and the constitutional history of England during the past seven centuries, or to accept the academic sophism of a gradual preparation for liberty, or merely to discuss isolated or omnibus grievances and strive to enlighten the darkness of the official mind by luminous speeches and resolutions, as was the general practice of Congress politics till 1905. A national agitation in the country which would make the Congress movement a living and acting force was always his ideal, and what the Congress would not do, he, when still an isolated leader of a handful of enthusiasts in a corner of the country, set out to do in his own strength and for his own hand. He saw from the first that for a people circumstanced like ours there could be only one political question and one aim, not the gradual improvement of the present administration into something in the end fundamentally the opposite of itself, but the early substitution of Indian and national

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for English and bureaucratic control in the affairs of India. A subject nation does not prepare itself by gradual progress for liberty; it opens by liberty its way to rapid progress. The only progress that has to be made in the preparation for liberty, is progress in the awakening of the national spirit and in the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty. It is these clear perceptions that have regulated his political career.

Therefore the whole of the first part of his political life was devoted to a vigorous and living propaganda for the reawakening and solidifying of the national life of Maharashtra. Therefore, too, when the Swadeshi agitation gave the first opportunity of a large movement in the same sense throughout India, he seized on it with avidity, while his past work in Maharashtra, his position as the leader of a small advanced section in the old Congress politics and his character, sacrifices and sufferings at once fixed the choice of the New Party on him as their predestined leader. The same master-idea made him seize on the four main points which the Bengal agitation had thrown into some beginning of practical form, Swaraj, Swadeshi, National Education and Boycott, and formulate them into a definite programme, which he succeeded in introducing among the resolutions of the Congress at the Calcutta session,—much to the

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detriment of the uniformity of sage and dignified impotence which had characterised the august, useful and calmly leisurely proceedings of that temperate national body. We all know the convulsion that followed the injection of this foreign matter; but we must see why Mr. Tilak insisted on administering annually so potent a remedy. The four resolutions were for him the first step towards shaking the Congress out of its torpid tortoise-like gait and turning it into a living and acting body.

Swaraj, complete and early self-government in whatever form, had the merit in his eyes of making definite and near to the national vision the one thing needful, the one aim that mattered, the one essential change that includes all the others. No nation can develop a living enthusiasm or accept great action and great sacrifices for a goal that is lost to its eye in the mist of far-off centuries; it must see it near and distinct before it, magnified by a present hope, looming largely and actualised as a living aim whose early realisation only depends on a great, sustained and sincere effort. National education meant for him the training of the young generation in the new national spirit to be the architects of liberty, if that was delayed, the citizens of a free India which had rediscovered itself, if the preliminary conditions were rapidly fulfilled. Swadeshi meant an actualising of the national self-consciousness and the national will

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and the readiness to sacrifice which would fix them in the daily mind and daily life of the people. In Boycott, which was only a popular name for passive resistance, he saw the means to give to the struggle between the two ideas in conflict, bureaucratic control and national control, a vigorous shape and body and to the popular side a weapon and an effective form of action. Himself a man of organization and action, he knew well that by action most, and not by thought and speech alone, can the will of a people be vivified, trained and made solid and enduring. To get a sustained authority from the Congress for a sustained effort in these four directions seemed to him of capital importance; this was the reason for his inflexible insistence on their unchanged inclusion when the programme seemed to him to be in danger.

Yet also, because he is a practical politician and a man of action, he has always, so long as the essentials were safe, been ready to admit any change in name or form or any modification of programme or action dictated by the necessities of the time. Thus during the movement of 1905-10 the Swadeshi leader and the Swadeshi party insisted on agitation in India and discouraged reliance on agitation in England, because the awaking and fixing of a self-reliant national spirit and will in India was the one work for the hour and in England no party or body of opinion existed which would listen to the national

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claim, nor could exist,—as anybody with the least knowledge of English politics could have told,—until that claim had been unmistakably and insistently made and was clearly supported by the fixed will of the nation. The Home Rule leader and the Home Rule party of today, which is only the "New Party" reborn with a new name, form and following, insist on the contrary on vigorous and speedy agitation in England, because the claim and the will have both been partially, but not sufficiently recognised, and because a great and growing British party now exists which is ready to make the Indian ideal part of its own programme. So, too, they insisted then on Swaraj and rejected with contempt all petty botching with the administration, because so alone could the real issue be made a living thing to the nation; now they accept readily enough a fairly advanced but still half-and-half scheme, but always with the proviso that the popular principle receives substantial embodiment and the full ideal is included as an early goal and not put off to a far-distant future. The leader of men in war or politics will always distrust petty and episodical gains which, while giving false hopes, are merely nominal and put off or even endanger the real issue, but will always seize on any advantage which brings decisive victory definitely nearer. It is only the pure idealist,—but let us remember that he too has his great and

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indispensable uses,—who insists always on either all or nothing. Not revolutionary methods or revolutionary idealism, but the clear sight and the direct propaganda and action of the patriotic political leader insisting on the one thing needful and the straight way to drive at it, have been the sense of Mr. Tilak's political career.

The speeches in this book belong both to the Swadeshi and the Home Rule periods, but mostly to the latter. They show Mr. Tilak's mind and policy and voice with great force that will and political thought now dominant in the country which he has so prominently helped to create. Mr. Tilak has none of the gifts of the orator which many lesser men have possessed, but his force of thought and personality make him in his own way a powerful speaker. He is at his best in his own Marathi tongue rather than in English; for there he finds always the apt and telling phrase, the striking application, the vigorous figure which go straight home to the popular mind. But there is essentially the same power in both. His words have the directness and force—no force can be greater—of a sincere and powerful mind always going immediately to the aim in view, the point before it, expressing it with a bare, concentrated economy of phrase and the insistence of the hammer full on the head of the nail which drives it in with a few blows. But the speeches have to be read with his

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life, his character, his life-long aims as their surrounding atmosphere. That is why I have dwelt on their main points;—not that all I have said is not well-known, but the repetition of known facts has its use when they are important and highly significant.

Two facts of his life and character have to be insisted on as of special importance to the country because they give a great example of two things in which its political life was long deficient and is even now not sufficient. First, the inflexible will of the patriot and man of sincere heart and thorough action which has been the very grain of his character: for aspirations, emotion, enthusiasm are nothing without this; will alone creates and prevails. And wish and will are not the same thing, but divided by a great gulf: the one, which is all most of us get to, is a puny, tepid and inefficient thing and, even when most enthusiastic, easily discouraged and turned from its object; the other can be a giant to accomplish and endure. Secondly, the readiness to sacrifice and face suffering, not needlessly or with a useless bravado, but with a firm courage when it comes, to bear it and to outlive, returning to work with one's scars as if nothing had happened. No prominent man in India has suffered more for his country; none has taken his sacrifices and sufferings more quietly and as a matter of course.

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The first part of Mr. Tilak's life-work is accomplished. Two great opportunities have hastened its success, of which he has taken full advantage. The lava-like flood of the Swadeshi movement fertilised the soil and did for the country in six years the work of six ordinary decades; it fixed the goal of freedom in the mind of the people. The sudden irruption of Mrs. Besant into the field with her unequalled gift, —born of her untiring energy, her flaming enthusiasm, her magnificent and magnetic personality, her spiritual force,—for bringing an ideal into the stage of actuality with one rapid whirl and rush, has been the second factor. Indeed the presence of three such personalities as Mr. Tilak, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Gandhi at the head and in the heart of the present movement, should itself be a sure guarantee of success. The nation has accepted the near fulfilment of his great aim as its own political aim, the one object of its endeavour, its immediate ideal. The Government of India and the British nation have accepted complete self-government as their final goal in Indian administration; a powerful party in England, the party which seems to command the future, has pronounced for its more speedy and total accomplishment. A handful of dissentients there may be in the country who still see only petty gains in the present and the rest in the dim vista of the centuries, but with this insignificant exception, all the Indian

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provinces and communities have spoken with one voice. Mr. Tilak's principles of work have been accepted; the ideas which he had so much trouble to enforce have become the commonplaces and truisms of our political thought. The only question that remains is the rapidity of a now inevitable evolution. That is the hope for which Mr. Tilak still stands, a leader of all India. Only when it is accomplished, will his life-work be done; not till then can he rest while he lives, even though age grows on him and infirmities gather,—for his spirit will always remain fresh and vigorous,—any more than a river can rest before the power of its waters has found their goal and discharged them into the sea. But whether that end,—the end of a first stage of our new national life, the beginning of a greater India reborn for self-fulfilment and the service of humanity,—come tomorrow or after a little delay, its accomplishment is now safe, and Mr. Tilak's name stands already for history as a nation-builder, one of the half-dozen greatest political personalities, memorable figures, representative men of the nation in this most critical period of India's destinies, a name to be remembered gratefully so long as the country has pride in its past and hope for its future.

Introduction to
Speeches and Writings of Tilak
1918

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DAYANANDA

I

The Man and His Work

Among the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renascence, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work. It is as if one were to walk for a long time amid a range of hills rising to a greater or lesser altitude, but all with sweeping contours, green-clad, flattering the eye even in their most bold and striking elevation. But amidst them all, one hill stands apart, piled up in sheer strength, a mass of bare and puissant granite, with verdure on its summit, a solitary pine jutting out into the blue, a great cascade of pure, vigorous and fertilising water gushing out from its strength as a very fountain of life and health to the valley. Such is the impression created on my mind by Dayananda.

It was Kathiawar that gave birth to this puissant

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renovator and new-creator. And something of the very soul and temperament of that peculiar land entered into his spirit, something of Girnar and the rocks and hills, something of the voice and puissance of the sea that flings itself upon those coasts, something of that humanity which seems to be made of the virgin and unspoilt stuff of Nature, fair and robust in body, instinct with a fresh and primal vigour, crude but in a developed nature capable of becoming a great force of genial creation.

When I seek to give an account to myself of my sentiment and put into precise form the impression I have received, I find myself starting from two great salient characteristics of this man's life and work which mark him off from his contemporaries and compeers. Other great Indians have helped to make India of today by a self-pouring into the psychological material of the race, a spiritual infusion of themselves into the fluent and indeterminate mass which will one day settle into consistency and appear as a great formal birth of Nature. They have entered in as a sort of leaven, a power of unformed stir and ferment out of which forms must result. One remembers them as great souls and great influences who live on in the soul of India. They are in us and we would not be what we are without them. But of no precise form can we say that this was what the man meant, still less that this form was the very body of that spirit.

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The example of Mahadev Govind Ranade presents itself to my mind as the very type of this peculiar action so necessary to a period of large and complex formation. If a foreigner were to ask us what this Mahratta economist, reformer, patriot precisely did that we give him so high a place in our memory, we should find it a little difficult to answer. We should have to point to those activities of a mass of men in which his soul and thought were present as a formless former of things, to the great figures of present-day Indian life who received the breath of his spirit. And in the end we should have to reply by a counter question, "What would Maharashtra of today have been without Mahadev Govind Ranade and what would India of today be without Maharashtra?" But even with those who were less amorphous and diffusive in their pressure on men and things, even with workers of a more distinct energy and action, I arrive fundamentally at the same impression. Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his

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Mother and in the souls of her children." So it is with all. Not only are the men greater than their definite works, but their influence is so wide and formless that it has little relation to any formal work that they have left behind them.

Very different was the manner of working of Dayananda. Here was one who did not infuse himself informally into the indeterminate soul of things, but stamped his figure indelibly as in bronze on men and things. Here was one whose formal works are the very children of his spiritual body, children fair and robust and full of vitality, the image of their creator. Here was one who knew definitely and clearly the work he was sent to do, chose his materials, determined his conditions with a sovereign clairvoyance of the spirit and executed his conception with the puissant mastery of the born worker. As I regard the figure of this formidable artisan in God's workshop, images crowd on me which are all of battle and work and conquest and triumphant labour. Here, I say to myself, was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality. The combination of these two words, usually so divorced from each other in our conceptions, seems to me the very definition of Dayananda.

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Even if we leave out of account the actual nature of the work he did, the mere fact that he did it in this spirit and to this effect would give him a unique place among our great founders. He brings back an old Aryan element into the national character. This element gives us the second of the differentiæ I observe and it is the secret of the first. We others live in a stream of influences; we allow them to pour through us and mould us; there is something shaped and out of it a modicum of work results, the rest is spilt out again in a stream of influence. We are indeterminate in our lines, we accommodate ourselves to circumstance and environment. Even when we would fain be militant and intransigent, we are really fluid and opportunist. Dayananda seized on all that entered into him, held it in himself, masterfully shaped it there into the form that he saw to be right and threw it out again into the forms that he saw to be right. That which strikes us in him as militant and aggressive, was a part of his strength of self-definition.

He was not only plastic to the great hand of Nature, but asserted his own right and power to use Life and Nature as plastic material. We can imagine his soul crying still to us with our insufficient spring of manhood and action, "Be not content, O Indian, only to be infinitely and grow vaguely, but see what God intends thee to be, determine in the light of

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His inspiration to what thou shalt grow. Seeing, hew that out of thyself, hew that out of Life. Be a thinker, but be also a doer; be a soul, but be also a man; be a servant of God, but be also a master of Nature!" For this was what he himself was; a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision. Hew is the right word. Granite himself, he smote out a shape of things with great blows as in granite.

In Dayananda's life we see always the puissant jet of this spiritual practicality. A spontaneous power and decisiveness is stamped everywhere on his work. And to begin with, what a master-glance of practical intuition was this to go back trenchantly to the very root of Indian life and culture, to derive from the flower of its first birth the seed for a radical new birth! And what an act of grandiose intellectual courage to lay hold upon this scripture defaced by ignorant comment and oblivion of its spirit, degraded by misunderstanding to the level of an ancient document of barbarism, and to perceive in it its real worth as a scripture which conceals in itself the deep and energetic spirit of the forefathers who made this country and nation,—a scripture of divine knowledge, divine worship, divine action. I know not whether Dayananda's powerful and original commentary will be widely accepted as the definite word on the Veda. I think myself some delicate work is still called

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for to bring out other aspects of this profound and astonishing Revelation. But this matters little. The essential is that he seized justly on the Veda as India's Rock of Ages and had the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole education of youth, a whole manhood and a whole nation-hood. Rammohan Roy, that other great soul and puissant worker who laid his hand on Bengal and shook her—to what mighty issues—out of her long, indolent sleep by her rivers and rice-fields—Rammohan Roy stopped short at the Upanishads. Dayananda looked beyond and perceived that our true original seed was the Veda. He had the national instinct and he was able to make it luminous,—an intuition in place of an instinct. Therefore the works that derive from him, however they depart from received traditions, must needs be profoundly national.

To be national is not to stand still. Rather, to seize on a vital thing out of the past and throw it into the stream of modern life, is really the most powerful means of renovation and new-creation. Dayananda's work brings back such a principle and spirit of the past to vivify a modern mould. And observe that in the work as in the life it is the past caught in the first jet of its virgin vigour, pure from its sources, near to its root principle and therefore to something eternal and always renewable.

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And in the work as in the man we find that faculty of spontaneous definite labour and vigorous formation which proceeds from an inner principle of perfect clearness, truth and sincerity. To be clear in one's own mind, entirely true and plain with one's self and with others, wholly honest with the conditions and materials of one's labour, is a rare gift in our crooked, complex and faltering humanity. It is the spirit of the Aryan worker and a sure secret of vigorous success. For always Nature recognises a clear, honest and recognisable knock at her doors and gives the result with an answering scrupulosity and diligence. And it is good that the spirit of the Master should leave its trace in his followers, that somewhere in India there should be a body of whom it can be said that when a work is seen to be necessary and right, the men will be forthcoming, the means forthcoming and that work will surely be done.

Truth seems a simple thing and is yet most difficult. Truth was the master-word of the Vedic teaching, truth in the soul, truth in vision, truth in the intention, truth in the act. Practical truth, *ārjava*, an inner candour and a strong sincerity, clearness and open honour in the word and deed, was the temperament of the old Aryan morals. It is the secret of a pure unspoilt energy, the sign that a man has not travelled far from Nature. It is the bardexter of the son of Heaven, Divasputra. This was the stamp that

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Dayananda left behind him and it should be the mark and effigy of himself by which the parentage of his work can be recognised. May his spirit act in India pure, unspoilt, unmodified and help to give us back that of which our life stands especially in need, pure energy, high clearness, the penetrating eye, the masterful hand, the noble and dominant sincerity.

Vedic Magazine, 1915

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II

Dayananda and the Veda

Dayananda accepted the Veda as his rock of firm foundation, he took it for his guiding view of life, his rule of inner existence and his inspiration for external work, but he regarded it as even more, the word of eternal Truth on which man's knowledge of God and his relations with the Divine Being and with his fellows can be rightly and securely founded. This everlasting rock of the Veda, many assert, has no existence, there is nothing there but the commonest mud and sand; it is only a hymnal of primitive barbarians, only a rude worship of personified natural phenomena, or even less than that, a liturgy of ceremonial sacrifice, half religion, half magic, by which superstitious animal men of yore hoped to get themselves gold and food and cattle, slaughter pitilessly their enemies, protect themselves from disease, calamity and demoniac influences and enjoy the coarse

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pleasures of a material Paradise. To that we must add a third view, the orthodox, or at least that which arises from Sayana's commentary; this view admits, practically, the ignobler interpretation of the substance of Veda and yet—or is it therefore?—exalts this primitive farrago as a holy Scripture and a Book of Sacred Works.

Now this matter is no mere scholastic question, but has a living importance, not only for a just estimate of Dayananda's work but for our consciousness of our past and for the determination of the influences that shall mould our future. A nation grows into what it shall be by the force of that which it was in the past and is in the present, and in this growth there come periods of conscious and subconscious stock-taking when the national soul selects, modifies, rejects, keeps out of all that it had or is acquiring whatever it needs as substance and capital for its growth and action in the future: in such a period of stock-taking we are still and Dayananda was one of its great and formative spirits. But among all the materials of our past the Veda is the most venerable and has been directly and indirectly the most potent. Even when its sense was no longer understood, even when its traditions were lost behind Pauranic forms, it was still held in honour, though without knowledge, as authoritative revelation and inspired Book of Knowledge, the source of all

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sanctions and standard of all truth.

But there has always been this double and incompatible tradition about the Veda that it is a book of ritual and mythology and that it is a book of divine knowledge. The Brahmanas seized on the one tradition, the Upanishads on the other. Later, the learned took the hymns for a book essentially of ritual and works, they went elsewhere for pure knowledge; but the instinct of the race bowed down before it with an obstinate inarticulate memory of a loftier tradition. And when in our age the Veda was brought out of its obscure security behind the purdah of a reverential neglect, the same phenomenon reappears. While Western scholarship extending the hints of Sayana seemed to have classed it for ever as a ritual liturgy to Nature-Gods, the genius of the race looking through the eyes of Dayananda pierced behind the error of many centuries and received again the intuition of a timeless revelation and a divine truth given to humanity. In any case, we have to make one choice or another. We can no longer securely enshrine the Veda wrapped up in the folds of an ignorant reverence or guarded by a pious self-deceit. Either the Veda is what Sayana says it is, and then we have to leave it behind for ever as the document of a mythology and ritual which have no longer any living truth or force for thinking minds, or it is what the European scholars say it is, and then we have to put it away

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among the relics of the past as an antique record of semi-barbarous worship; or else it is indeed Veda, a book of divine knowledge, and then it becomes of supreme importance to us to know and to hear its message.

It is objected to the sense Dayananda gave to the Veda that it is no true sense but an arbitrary fabrication of imaginative learning and ingenuity, to his method that it is fantastic and unacceptable to the critical reason, to his teaching of a revealed Scripture that the very idea is a rejected superstition impossible for any enlightened mind to admit or to announce sincerely. I will not now examine the solidity of Dayananda's interpretation of Vedic texts, nor anticipate the verdict of the future on his commentary, nor discuss his theory of revelation. I shall only state the broad principles underlying his thought about the Veda as they present themselves to me. For in the action and thought of a great soul or a great personality the vital thing to my mind is not the form he gave to it, but in his action the helpful power he put forth and in his thought the helpful truth he has added or, it may be, restored to the yet all too scanty stock of our human acquisition and divine potentiality.

To start with the negation of his work by his critics, in whose mouth does it lie to accuse Dayananda's dealings with the Veda of a fantastic or arbitrary

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ingenuity? Not in the mouth of those who accept Sayana's traditional interpretation. For if ever there was a monument of arbitrarily erudite ingenuity, of great learning divorced, as great learning too often is, from sound judgment and sure taste and a faithful, critical and comparative observation, from direct seeing and often even from plainest commonsense or of a constant fitting of the text into the Procrustean bed of preconceived theory, it is surely this commentary, otherwise so imposing, so useful as first crude material, so erudite and laborious, left to us by the Acharya Sayana. Nor does the reproach lie in the mouth of those who take as final the recent labours of European scholarship. For if ever there was a toil of interpretation in which the loosest rein has been given to an ingenious speculation, in which doubtful indications have been snatched at as certain proofs, in which the boldest conclusions have been insisted upon with the scantiest justification, the most enormous difficulties ignored and preconceived prejudice maintained in face of the clear and often admitted suggestions of the text, it is surely this labour, so eminently respectable otherwise for its industry, good will and power of research, performed through a long century by European Vedic scholarship.

What is the main positive issue in this matter? An interpretation of Veda must stand or fall by its central conception of the Vedic religion and the

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amount of support given to it by the intrinsic evidence of the Veda itself. Here Dayananda's view is quite clear, its foundation inexpugnable. The Vedic hymns are chanted to the One Deity under many names, names which are used and even designed to express His qualities and powers. Was this conception of Dayananda's an arbitrary conceit fetched out of his own too ingenious imagination? Not at all; it is the explicit statement of the Veda itself: "One existent, sages"—not the ignorant, mind you, but the seers, the men of knowledge,—"speak of in many ways, as Indra, as Yama, as Matariswan, as Agni". The Vedic Rishis ought surely to have known something about their own religion, more, let us hope, than Roth or Max Muller, and this is what they knew.

We are aware how modern scholars twist away from the evidence. This hymn, they say, was a late production, this loftier idea which it expresses with so clear a force rose up somehow in the later Aryan mind or was borrowed by those ignorant fire-worshippers, sun-worshippers, sky-worshippers from their cultured and philosophic Dravidian enemies. But throughout the Veda we have confirmatory hymns and expressions: Agni or Indra or another is expressly hymned as one with all the other gods. Agni contains all other divine powers within himself, the Maruts are described as all the gods, one deity is addressed by the names of others as well as his own, or, most

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commonly, he is given as Lord and King of the universe attributes only appropriate to the Supreme Deity. Ah, but that cannot mean, ought not to mean, must not mean, the worship of One; let us invent a new word, call it henotheism and suppose that the Rishis did not really believe Indra or Agni to be the Supreme Deity but treated any god or every god as such for the nonce, perhaps that he might feel the more flattered and lend a more gracious ear for so hyperbolic a compliment! But why should not the foundation of Vedic thought be natural monotheism rather than this new-fangled monstrosity of henotheism? Well, because primitive barbarians could not possibly have risen to such high conceptions and, if you allow them to have so risen, you imperil our theory of the evolutionary stages of the human development and you destroy our whole idea about the sense of the Vedic hymns and their place in the history of mankind. Truth must hide herself, commonsense disappear from the field so that a theory may flourish! I ask, in this point, and it is *the* fundamental point, who deals most straightforwardly with the text, Dayananda or the Western scholars?

But if this fundamental point of Dayananda's is granted, if the character given by the Vedic Rishis themselves to their gods is admitted, we are bound, whenever the hymns speak of Agni or another, to see behind that name present always to the thought of the

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Rishi the one Supreme Deity or else one of His powers with its attendant qualities or workings. Immediately the whole character of the Veda is fixed in the sense Dayananda gave to it; the merely ritual, mythological, polytheistic interpretation of Sayana collapses, the merely meteorological and naturalistic European interpretation collapses. We have instead a real Scripture, one of the world's sacred books and the divine word of a lofty and noble religion.

All the rest of Dayananda's theory arises logically out of this fundamental conception. If the names of the godheads express qualities of the one Godhead and it is these which the Rishis adored and towards which they directed their aspiration, then there must inevitably be in the Veda a large part of psychology of the Divine Nature, psychology of the relations of man with God and a constant indication of the law governing man's Godward conduct. Dayananda asserts the presence of such an ethical element, he finds in the Veda the law of life given by God to the human being. And if the Vedic godheads express the powers of a supreme Deity who is Creator, Ruler and Father of the universe, then there must inevitably be in the Veda a large part of cosmology, the law of creation and of cosmos. Dayananda asserts the presence of such a cosmic element, he finds in the Veda the secrets of creation and law of Nature by which the Omniscient governs the world.

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Neither Western scholarship nor ritualistic learning has succeeded in eliminating the psychological and ethical value of the hymns, but they have both tended in different degrees to minimise it. Western scholars minimise because they feel uneasy whenever ideas that are not primitive seem to insist on their presence in these primeval utterances; they do not hesitate openly to abandon in certain passages interpretations which they adopt in others and which are admittedly necessitated by their own philological and critical reasoning because, if admitted always, they would often involve deep and subtle psychological conceptions which *cannot* have occurred to primitive minds! Sayana minimises because his theory of Vedic discipline was not ethical righteousness with a moral and spiritual result but mechanical performance of ritual with a material reward. But, in spite of these efforts of suppression, the lofty ideas of the Vedas still reveal themselves in strange contrast to its alleged burden of fantastic naturalism or dull ritualism. The Vedic godheads are constantly hymned as Masters of Wisdom, Power, Purity, purifiers, healers of grief and evil, destroyers of sin and falsehood, warriors for the truth; constantly the Rishis pray to them for healing and purification, to be made seers of knowledge, possessors of the truth, to be upheld in the divine law, to be assisted and armed with strength, manhood and

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energy. Dayananda has brought this idea of the divine right and truth into the Veda; the Veda is as much and more a book of divine Law as Hebrew Bible or Zoroastrian Avesta.

The cosmic element is not less conspicuous in the Veda; the Rishis speak always of the worlds, the firm laws that govern them, the divine workings in the cosmos. But Dayananda goes farther; he affirms that the truths of modern physical science are discoverable in the hymns. Here we have the sole point of fundamental principle about which there can be any justifiable misgivings. I confess my incompetence to advance any settled opinion in the matter. But this much needs to be said that his idea is increasingly supported by the recent trend of our knowledge about the ancient world. The ancient civilisations did possess secrets of science some of which modern knowledge has recovered, extended and made more rich and precise but others are even now not recovered. There is then nothing fantastic in Dayananda's idea that Veda contains truth of science as well as truth of religion. I will even add my own conviction that Veda contains other truths of a science the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case Dayananda has rather understated than overstated the depth and range of the Vedic wisdom.

Objection has also been made to the philological and etymological method by which he arrived at

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his results, especially in his dealings with the names of the godheads. But this objection, I feel certain, is an error due to our introduction of modern ideas about language into our study of this ancient tongue. We moderns use words as counters without any memory or appreciation of their original sense; when we speak we think of the object spoken of, not at all of the expressive word which is to us a dead and brute thing, mere coin of verbal currency with no value of its own. In early language the word was on the contrary a living thing with essential powers of signification; its root meanings were remembered because they were still in use, its wealth of force was vividly present to the mind of the speaker. We say "wolf" and think only of the animal, any other sound would have served our purpose as well, given the convention of its usage; the ancients said "tearer" and had that significance present to them. We say "agni" and think of fire, the word is of no other use to us; to the ancients "agni" means other things besides and only because of one or more of its root meanings was applied to the physical object fire. Our words are carefully limited to one or two senses, theirs were capable of a great number and it was quite easy for them, if they so chose, to use a word like Agni, Varuna or Vayu as a sound-index of a great number of connected and complex ideas, a key-word. It cannot be doubted that the Vedic

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Rishis did take advantage of this greater potentiality of their language,—note their dealings with such words as *gau* and *chandra*. The Nirukta bears evidence to this capacity and in the Brahmanas and Upanishads we find the memory of this free and symbolic use of words still subsisting.

Certainly, Dayananda had not the advantage that a comparative study of languages gives to the European scholar. There are defects in the ancient Nirukta which the new learning, though itself sadly defective, still helps us to fill in and in future we shall have to use both sources of light for the elucidation of Veda. Still this only affects matters of detail and does not touch the fundamental principles of Dayananda's interpretation. Interpretation in detail is a work of intelligence and scholarship and in matters of intelligent opinion and scholarship men seem likely to differ to the end of the chapter, but in all the basic principles, in those great and fundamental decisions where the eye of intuition has to aid the workings of the intellect, Dayananda stands justified by the substance of Veda itself, by logic and reason and by our growing knowledge of the past of mankind. The Veda does hymn the one Deity of many names and powers; it does celebrate the divine Law and man's aspiration to fulfil it; it does purport to give us the law of the cosmos.

On the question of revelation I have left myself

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no space to write. Suffice it to say that here too Dayananda was perfectly logical and it is quite grotesque to charge him with insincerity because he held to and proclaimed the doctrine. There are always three fundamental entities which we have to admit and whose relations we have to know if we would understand existence at all, God, Nature and the Soul. If, as Dayananda held on strong enough grounds, the Veda reveals to us God, reveals to us the law of Nature, reveals to us the relations of the soul to God and Nature, what is it but a revelation of divine Truth? And if, as Dayananda held, it reveals them to us with a perfect truth, flawlessly, he might well hold it for an infallible Scripture. The rest is a question of the method of revelation, of the divine dealings with our race, of man's psychology and possibilities. Modern thought, affirming Nature and Law but denying God, denied also the possibility of revelation; but so also has it denied many things which a more modern thought is very busy reaffirming. We cannot demand of a great mind that it shall make itself a slave to vulgarly received opinion or the transient dogmas of the hour; the very essence of its greatness is this, that it looks beyond, that it sees deeper.

In the matter of Vedic interpretation I am convinced that whatever may be the final complete interpretation, Dayananda will be honoured as the

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first discoverer of the right clues. Amidst the chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding his was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential. He has found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned fountains.

Vedic Magazine, 1916

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THE MEN THAT PASS

ROMESH CHANDRA DUTT is dead. After a long life of the most manifold and untiring energy, famous, honoured, advanced in years, with a name known in England as well as in India, the man always successful, always favoured of Fortune, always striving to deserve her by skill and diligence, type of a race that passes, of a generation that to younger minds is fast losing the appearance of reality and possibility, has passed away at the height and summit of his career before his great capacities could justify themselves to the full in his new station, but also before the defects of his type could be thoroughly subjected to the severe ordeal of the times that have come upon us. The landmarks of the past fall one by one and none rise in their place. The few great survivors here and there become more and more dignified monuments of the last century and less and less creators of the living present. New ideals, new problems, new men, almost a new race wholly different in mind, character, temperament, feeling, rise swiftly and wait till they can open the gates of the future and occupy the field of action.

The official, the liberal Congress politician, the

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well-read litterateur, the Oriental scholar, the journalist proficient in English and fluent of Western ideas, the professional man successful and sleek, these were the foremost men of the old generation, those who were in the eyes of all *sreshtha*, the best, in whose footsteps, therefore, all strove to follow and on whose pattern all formed themselves. An active, self-confident, voiceful generation making up by these qualities for the lack of height, depth and breadth in their culture and atoning for the unoriginal imitativeness to which they were doomed by the fidelity in detail and framework of the imitation! In all but one of these lines of activity Romesh Dutt had achieved a high distinction among the men of his own generation, and we doubt whether another man could be pointed out among them so many-sided, so full of strength and hope and energy, so confident, so uniformly successful. Nature was liberal to him of her gifts, Fortune of her favours. A splendid physique, robust and massive, equipped him to bear the strain of an unceasing activity: a nature buoyant, sanguine, strong, as healthy as his frame, armed him against the shocks of life and commanded success by insisting upon it; an egoism natural to such a robust vitality seized on all things as its provender and enabled its possessor thoroughly to enjoy the good things of life which it successfully demanded; a great tact and *savoir faire* steered him clear of unnecessary friction and avoidable difficulties;

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an unrivalled quickness of grasp, absorption and assimilation, more facile than subtle or deep, helped him to make his own all that he heard or read; a rapid though not ingenious brain showed him how to use his material with the best effect and most practical utility; and a facile pen and speech which never paused for a thought or a word, could always be trusted to clothe what he wished to convey in a form respectable and effective and so well put as to conceal the absence of native literary faculty and intellectual distinction. These were Nature's presents to him at his birth. Fortune placed him in a wealthy, well-read and well-known family, gave him the best advantages of education the times could afford, sent him to England and opened the doors of the Civil Service, the pinnacle of the young Indian's aspiration in his days, and crowned him with the highest prizes that that highest of careers could yield to a man of his hue and blood. It is characteristic of his career that he should have died as Prime Minister of the Indian State which has been most successful in reproducing and improving upon the Anglo-Indian model of administration.

There were limits, as we have hinted, to the liberality of Nature. Of all the great Bengalis of his time Romesh Dutt was perhaps the least original. His administrative faculties were of the second order, not of the first; though he stood for a time foremost among the most active of Congress politicians and

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controversialists, he was neither a Ranade nor a Surendranath, had neither the gift of the organiser and political thinker nor the gift of the orator; he had literary talent of an imitative kind but no literary genius; he wrote well on scholastic subjects and translated pleasantly and effectively, but was no great Sanskrit scholar: he cannot rank with Ranade or even with Gokhale as an economist, and yet his are the most politically effective contributions to economic literature in India that recent years have produced. It must be admitted that his activity and dexterity of work were far in excess of his literary ability or scholastic conscientiousness. It is doubtful, therefore, whether any of his voluminous works in many kinds will be remembered, with the possible though not very certain exception of his Bengali historical novels in which he touched his creative highwater mark. His translation of the Rigveda by its ease and crispness blinds the uninitiated reader to the fact that it may be a very pretty translation but it is not the Veda. His history of ancient Indian civilisation is a masterly compilation, void of original research, which is rapidly growing antiquated. In fact, the one art he possessed in the highest degree and in which alone it can be said that he did not only well but best, was the art of the journalist and pamphleteer. Originality and deep thought are not required of a journalist, nor delicacy, nor subtlety; his success would be limited rather than assisted by

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such qualities. To seize victoriously on the available materials, catch in them what will be interesting and effective and put it brightly and clearly, this is the *dharma* of the journalist, and, if we add the power of making the most of a case and enforcing a given view with irresistible energy, dexterity and apparent unanswerableness, we shall have added all that is necessary to turn the journalist into the pamphleteer. No man of our time has had these gifts to the same extent as Romesh Dutt. The best things he ever did were, in our view, his letters to Lord Curzon and his Economic History. The former fixed public opinion in India irretrievably and nobody cared even to consider Lord Curzon's answer. "That settles it" was the general feeling every ordinary reader contracted for good after reading this brilliant and telling indictment. Without the Economic History and its damning story of England's commercial and fiscal dealings with India we doubt whether the public mind would have been ready for the Boycott. In this one instance it may be said of him that he not only wrote history but created it. But all his works, with the exception of the historical novels, were rather pieces of successful journalism than literature. Still, even where it was most defective, his work was always useful to the world. For instance, his Ramayana and Mahabharata, though they are poor and commonplace poetry and do unpardonable violence to the spirit of the original, yet familiarised

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the average reader in England with the stories of the epics and thus made the way easy for future interpreters of the East to the West. In brief, this may be said in unstinted praise of Romesh Dutt, that he was a gigantic worker and did an immense amount of pioneer spadework by which the future will benefit.

We have dwelt on this interesting and vigorous personality as one of the most typical of the men that pass, much more typical than greater or more original contemporaries. The work they did is over and the qualities with which they were equipped for that work will no longer sufficiently serve our purpose. An education at once more subtle and more massive, a greater originality, force and range of intellectual activity, an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the glut of a giant for work and action, mighty qualities of soul, a superhuman courage, self-abnegation and power to embrace and practise almost impossible ideals, these are the virtues and gifts India demands from the greatest among her sons in the future so that they may be sufficient to her work and her destinies. But such gifts as Romesh Dutt possessed are not to be despised. Especially did his untiring capacity for work and his joyous vitality and indestructible buoyancy make him a towering reproach to the indolent, listless, sneering and anaemic generation that intervened between him and the recent renascence.

Karmayogin—4th December, 1909

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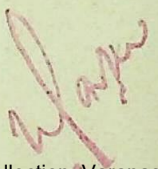

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